

Summary
Agriculture, Fish and Water (AFW) Process
FOTG Executive Committee Meeting #3
April 26, 2000, Mt. Vernon, WA

1. Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Bob Hart welcomed all to Skagit County, Mt. Vernon and to the meeting. Introductions were made and Paul LaCroix was recognized and thanked for all the work he put into this meeting. The group went over the March 22-23 final draft meeting summary and approved the summary with no changes.

Tim covered the media policy in the ground rules. The group discussed the issues of media attending the meetings/field tours and how we want to work with them. Paul met with them at Indian Slough yesterday. Another issue was how do we get back to the media following today's meeting.

Decision: If media attend field trips, landowners must be notified in advance and approve.

Mike R. presented the Potential Funding Sources Handbook, which includes an index of funding sources.

Action Item: Mike asked that informal feedback from the committee on the Funding Source Handbook be sent to Paula or Mike.

2. 4(d) Rule Update

Tim went over the major timeline issues:

- 1) Steelhead rule is in process (should be final June 2000)—tentatively goes into effect August 19, 2000 (prohibitions are already in place);
- 2) Bull Trout rule is in effect; and
- 3) Chinook rule is targeted to be final August 2000 and would go into effect six months later.

4(d) rule update on state/fed meeting. Goal is to set up next meeting to include Ag caucus members within the next two weeks. This meeting would also include 4(d) rule AFW reference and pesticides discussion. Endangered ESUs were suggested as an additional item to be covered. 4d rule can not modify ESUs. Final rule should also address pesticides issues.

A state/fed workgroup has been established, membership includes Services (EPA, NMFS, USFWS), and DOE to date.

Action item:

- Meeting date agreed upon is May 1, 1:30 pm at North Bend Library. Meeting information will be sent out.

3. Looking Ahead – Agenda Setting

Tim addressed issues around challenges of looming ESA timelines and how the AFW process relates.

Services agree to basic concepts:

- 1) one size doesn't fit all,
- 2) there is something called Ag science, and
- 3) their science is based on functions.

Tim would like to begin the discussion/debate on Ag science and the functions we are trying to preserve. Flexibility is required.

How do we get to a more aggressive schedule to get to the key issues? Suggestion: feds come in with detail level of what they're looking for (the framework around functions). Help to clarify what ESA wants/needs. Needs to be a measurable outcome, without being prescriptive and overly regulatory.

Tim's main talking points: need to cut to the substance; have informed process with information from state/feds; farm community needs to start informing what they can/can't put on the table. (Dual responsibility.) Agreement needs to fit everyone's needs.

Ag community would like to see framework first, before beginning negotiations. Then begin looking at key elements and putting "meat on the bones."

Have a general understanding of riparian needs; unclear about differences between biological functions of fish and hydrologic issues. Could use this as framework to begin discussion. Difference between eastern/western WA; need to link with existing processes (Skagit Co. buffer, Tri-County efforts, etc.)

Updating FOTGs is the task this group took on. Services willing to discuss functions at tours, but would also like to do it through classroom setting.

Comment: Potato ready to move forward, need clarity on regional or watershed-type basis. 1. Would like to see an attempt from the Feds to list FOTGs and explain what is needed and work with Ag to see what they're able to do based on a geographical region. 2. Wants and needs around pesticides issues. Work closely with EPA and others making sure that there is proper usage.

Response: building a foundation takes time, we're feeling rushed, don't abandon trust building going on. Want to get going on the detail. Need serious commitment. Want 2-3 day workshop in linking physical needs with functions. Could be ready to do in June (Yakima) or July.

Use FOTG as context for this discussion. Do both at the same time (trust building and negotiation process).

Ag needs to know what the problems are so that they can begin accumulating the data. Use field trips to show the other side of the coin. Yakima can not be covered in half day.

Health of riparian habitat zones/functions needs to be looked at.

Q: If no place holder language in 4(d) rule, where do we go?

A: Language acknowledging AFW in process, also pesticides language.

Folks working on tour sites need to work closely with Feds in setting tours up.

Tim suggested we add additional day(s) to the June 28th EC meeting in June. July & August meeting dates/content also needs to be looked at.

Dick Wallace gave a presentation on elements of AFW science. (See handout)

Took broader landscape view and tried to break the science down.

Dealing with:

- Meteorology/Hydrology
- Geology
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Fish
- Water Quality
- Engineering
- Urban Stormwater
- Geomorphology

Discussion on schedule changes and limitations based on Ag producers' timeframes. Video taping the training and field tours was suggested for those who will not be able to attend.

Gerry would like to see these two processes done together. Julie suggested pulling out one FOTG as an example to start working on. Example: FOTGs that focus on clean water could be done quickly. Tackle riparian FOTGs after training.

A number of FOTGs can be looked at by a technical team while the educational process is occurring.

Ag community doesn't have a technical person that they could send to the technical team. Recommendations need to come back to the table and truth tested on the ground. #391 may vary based on other farm actions.

Ag needs to start thinking about FOTGs, functions, and land and how these relate while the feds are doing their work. Ag feels they don't know where to start. They need to know the functions before they begin. Sharing needs to happen between the feds and Ag.

Request that the feds have something to bring back to the May EC mtg. Feds feel they will be able to bring back "preliminary" work.

Ag needs “down and dirty” executive summaries that explain functions in a simple format with details. Send out before next meeting.

Charlie B. offered the Upper Columbia River Basin as the site for July 26th meeting.

Action items:

- Feds will start working on functions piece and how that relates to policy and bring back preliminary work to May meeting. Ag caucus will coordinate with feds on the tour part of the meeting.
- Feds will begin evaluating the FOTGs to evaluate a process to racket sown on what needs to be framed, a general target as to what needs to be done for ESA—NRCS will be the lead.
- Feds will begin putting together a 2-3 day functions process (includes ESA/CWA) for the June meeting. Would include describing what fish need and explaining/evaluating which FOTGs relate to fish. USFWS and NMFS will be leads.
- Ag caucus will start looking at existing FOTGs and what needs to be changed, what is the role of science and what does this mean on the landscape.
- Tim will coordinate changes to Executive Committee meeting schedule for June meeting. It was suggested that early June might be better.
- From the Ag caucus--Wheat, Cattle, Farm Bureau and Grange will work on coordinating the September meeting.
- Rough tour agendas are being built for June and July meetings.

4. Overview of Field Trip

Paul walked us through the differences of western WA field tour, used a map to point out tour sites and what we will be looking at. He introduced his two speakers, Alice Studley and Steve Seymour.

Steve Seymour, WA Fish and Wildlife, talked about spawning habitat/rearing habitat and fish needs (wood, gravel, clean water, etc.). This included information on fall, summer, and spring chinook, coho, sea-run cutthroat and trout. Difficult to restore these habitats/minimum buffers. Really dependent on the estuaries.

Alison Studley, Manager of Skagit Basin Fisheries Enhancement Group, explained goals of statewide nonprofit enhancement groups (see informational packet) and shared information on examples of Skagit area restoration projects.

Carolyn Kelly, who put the informational packet together, explained its content.

5. Field Trip

The group boarded buses and toured the following sites:

Devries Dairy
McRae Farm
Bob Smith Creek
Indian Slough
Brown Slough

Handouts:

Agenda
Final draft meeting summary
FOTG Executive Committee membership list
Year 2000 meeting schedule
AFW “Science” PowerPoint presentation handout
The Habitat Approach, Implementation of Section 7...
Making Endangered Species Act Determination of Effect for Individual or Grouped Actions at the Watershed Scale
Diking the Delta – Skagit Valley – 1800s
Map of tour sites

AFW FOTG Executive Committee Meeting #3
April 26, 2000—Mt. Vernon
Attendee List

Name	Representing
1. Babcock, Elizabeth	NMFS
2. Beechie, Tim	NMFS/NWFSC
3. Borck, Gretchen	Wheat Growers
4. Brown, Charlie	Potato Commission
5. Cheney, Chris	Dairy Federation
6. Crerar, Linda	WSDA
7. de Young, Jack	WEC
8. Deusen, Millard	WDFW
9. Donnelly, Bob	NMFS
10. Everitt, Bob	WDFW
11. Faulconer, Lee	WSDA
12. Foster, Alix	Swinomish Tribe
13. Fullerton, Karla	Cattlemen's Assoc.
14. Granger, Pete	WA Fish Growers
15. Hagensen, Julie	EPA
16. Hamilton, Rod	FSA
17. Hanson, Heather	WA Friends of Farms & Forests
18. Hart, Bob	Skagit County
19. Hazen, Jim	Hort. Assoc.
20. Hirsh, David	NMFS
21. Isaak, Kurt	WACD
22. Jackson, Gerry	USFWS
23. Jensen, Martha	USFWS
24. Jesernig, Jim	WSDA
25. Johnson, Linda	Farm Bureau
26. LaCroix, Paul	W.W. Farm Crops Assoc.
27. Landino, Steve	NMFS
28. Lee, Bob	Senate Ag Committee
29. Longenbaugh, Matt	NMFS
30. Lund, Hertha	Hay Growers Assoc.
31. Mankowski, John	WDFW
32. Mayer, Kirk	Hort. Assoc.
33. Meyer, Steve	WCC
34. Monsen, Jeff	Whatcom County
35. Morley, Philip	Snohomish County
36. Nelson, Rick	Cattlemen's Assoc.
37. Noble, Sandy	USFWS
38. Batts, Pat	Farm Bureau

39. Poulsen, Karen	Hay Growers
40. Poulson, Mike	Hay Growers Assoc.
41. Ralph, Alisa	USFWS
42. Rep. Linville staff	Legislature
43. Rundlett, Mike	WCC
44. Jackson, Debbie	Sen. Rasmussen (Legislature)
45. Seymour, Steve	WDFW
46. Small, Jim	Hort. Assoc.
47. Smith, Paula	WCC
48. Appel, Steve	Farm Bureau
49. Stockle, Claudio	WSU
50. Studley, Allison	WDFW
51. Thompson, Tim	Facilitator
52. Trefry, Stu	WCC
53. Wallace, Dick	Ecology
54. Wasserman, Larry	Skagit System Co-op
55. Priest, Jim	Colville Confed. Tribes
56. Willis, Lynn	WSDA
57. Broili, Mike	NRC
58. Sheahan, Tom	Skagit County
59. Wesen, Lyle	Skagit Dairy Farmer
60. Kelly, Carolyn	Skagit County Conservation District
61. Parsons, Jeff	National Audubon Society
62. Easter, Frank	NRCS
63. MacConnell	WSU Cooperative Extension
64. Craford, Kent	Sen. Slade Gorton
65. McRae, Janet	Cattleman's Assoc.
66. Wisnieewski, Veronica	Whatcom County
67. Dyckman, Claire	King County DDES
68. Rose, Bob	Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland
69. Doeages, Rich	Skagit County
70. Zimmerman, Jim	State Granger